To many college students the decision to get a piercing might be taken lightly. I wish I could say that I am one of those people. My family, you see, is strict, judgmental and above all Southern. This combination of characteristics complicates the simplest of decisions, turning every one into an excruciating mental pro/con list. As infuriating as it can be I’ve come to the conclusion that it’s all out of love. And that’s why I believe in family.

One day, about a year ago, an idea came to me. I just wanted a nose piercing. There was no real provocation; it was just an impulse. But I had to have it. In both a strategic and naïve move, I decided to ask my mom what she thought before going through with it. Strategic because talking to her about a decision like this might make it more acceptable to her. Naïve because there is no way on earth that she would support me. She sees it as something that makes me unemployable. I retort that I can take it out at anytime. She says it’ll leave a scar. A friend of hers, a coworker, had a second ear piercing and it is still visible, she tells me. Obviously this conversation is going nowhere so I tell her not to worry. It was just inkling. Not even a fully formed embryo of an idea.

So the next week I get my nose pierced. Just a little stud, and I loved it. Sometimes with my family you have to adhere to your own moral compass instead of theirs because you truly believe that your decision is justified. After all I was twenty years old. So two months later the implications of my decision hit me. I would be going home soon for Thanksgiving and I knew that there was nothing wrong with getting a piercing but I knew my family would frown upon it. Seeing as Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday I didn’t want to spoil it. So I took out that little piece of metal and flew home the next day.

Upon arrival at the airport I was greeted by my family. Everything about my return was, at first glance, normal. We decided to go to lunch downtown. When we got out of the car, on the way to the restaurant my mother noticed what remained of my piercing: a miniscule scar. She knew instantly and was furious. I tried to evade, to lie but it was no use. Thanksgiving was dead on my arrival. Or so I thought. The lunch was tense to say the least. My well-reasoned arguments crumbled against my mother’s attorney-style of debate.

Lunch may have been ruined but Thanksgiving wasn’t. It was the same as always: full of food, family, fast-paced conversation and playful ridicule. Even though I knew I was right, I didn’t regret my decision to abide by my family’s wishes. Everything they do is out of love and with good intent. For once I didn’t put up a fight. I can’t decide if that makes me weak or if I’m just growing up. That Thanksgiving I silently gave thanks that my family and I have the same political beliefs. Because that would really be an uphill battle.